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wherein said light is applied in such a manner that the intensity of said light in a predetermined area on the photo mask is distributed within a range of $\pm 11.2\%$ of an average intensity of said light in said area.

REMARKS

The title has been amended to better describe the invention.

Claims 1 and 17-22 have been amended to clarify the invention. More particularly, claims 1 and 17-22 have been amended to clarify that these claims are process claims. The Examiner relies on MPEP Section 2164.08(A), which is directed to means claims. Since claims 1 and 17-22 are now process claims, the Examiner's rejection has been rendered moot.

Turning to the rejection of claims 1 and 17-22 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Suzuki (JP Patent No. 6-267,826), the Examiner's rejection is in error. Paragraph 45 of Suzuki, which the Examiner cites as teaching an illuminance homogeneity of 1 percent, actually is discussing the degree of error for illuminance homogeneity, as opposed to an operating range. Thus, Suzuki does not teach the required range that the intensity of light vary $\pm 11.2\%$. and Suzuki cannot anticipate this aspect of claims 1 and 22, nor any claims dependent therefrom.

No new matter has been entered. Pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.121, a marked copy of the amended claims showing the changes made therein accompanies this Amendment.

Having dealt with all the objections raised by the Examiner, it is believed the Application now is in order for allowance.

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Serial No. 09/612,551
Docket No. NEC WNZ-2212
Amendment D

In the event there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge them (or credit any overpayment) to our Deposit Account Number 08-1391.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on February 14, 2003, at Tucson, Arizona.

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MARKED AMENDED CLAIMS

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MARKED CLAIMS SHOWING CHANGES MADE

1. (Twice Amended) A semiconductor thin film forming [system for] method comprising:
modifying a predetermined region of a semiconductor thin film by exposing the semiconductor thin film to a projected light patterned through plural patterns formed on a photo mask[,]; and

[said system comprising a mechanism for] uniformizing the light to be applied in such a manner that the intensity of said light in a predetermined area on the photo mask distributes within a range of $\pm 11.2\%$ of the average intensity of said light in said area[;],

wherein spatial distribution of peak intensity of light projected and applied on the semiconductor thin film is uniformized to an identical extent with the peak intensity of the intensity distribution on the photo mask.

17. (Amended) [A system] The method according to claim 1, wherein said projected light comprises a laser [source] beam.

18. (Amended) [A system] The method according to claim 17, wherein said laser [source comprises] beam is generated by an excimer laser.

19. (Amended) [A system] The method according to claim 17, wherein said [mechanism for uniformizing] light is uniformized using [the light comprises] a homogenizer, a mask and a projection lens through which said light is applied.

20. (Amended) [A system] The method according to claim 19, wherein said mask includes a slit for throttling light passed through the homogenizer into a rectangular beam.

21. (Amended) A [system] method according to claim 19, [and further including] wherein a projection lens is used for reducing and projecting a slit image of the mask onto said film.

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22. (Amended) A semiconductor thin film forming [system for] method comprising:
modifying a predetermined region of a semiconductor thin film by exposing the
semiconductor thin film to a projected light patterned through plural patterns formed on a photo
mask,
wherein said light is applied in such a manner that the intensity of said light in a
predetermined area on the photo mask is distributed within a range of $\pm 11.2\%$ of an average
intensity of said light in said area.